



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



MEDIA RELEASE

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SOUTHERN MARYLAND COUNTIES CELEBRATE SOCIAL WORK MONTH BY NAMING SOCIAL WORKERS OF THE YEAR

*Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties
Applaud Child Welfare and Adult Services Workers*

BALTIMORE – March is National Social Work Appreciation Month and local departments of social services in each jurisdiction are honoring workers who represent the best in the profession.

Calvert County Department of Social Services (DSS) is honoring Continuing Child Protective Services worker **Bonnie Horton** as their worker of the year.

Charles County DSS has tapped **Marion C. Schoen**, a 14-year veteran of their agency
Alice McCreight, Family Services caseworker, is the St. Mary's County DSS selection

Social workers and caseworkers perform a wide range of essential tasks including determining the safety of children, identifying new foster parents, helping facilitate adoption services and ensuring the well being of elderly residents who live independently. They touch the lives of thousands of vulnerable children and adults in Maryland and across the country.

“Our social workers are dedicated professionals that strive daily to make a positive difference in the lives of others,” said Department of Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald. “Now, more than ever, they are the vital link between Maryland’s most vulnerable population and an array of support services that this population needs.” Last year, over 600,000 Marylanders received one or more of the services provided by the Department of Human Resources and its 24 local Departments of Social Services across the state.

Each of the Southern Maryland counties, (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s) have selected a worker of the year that best represents the “*purpose and possibilities*” in social work – this year’s national social work appreciation month theme. Supervisors, co-workers and peers selected from workers that exhibit the best qualities of the profession.

Bonnie Horton has been a case worker with Calvert County Department of Social Services since 1999, serving in the capacity of Continuing Child Protective Service Case Worker. As a continuing CPS worker, Bonnie assists families with complex needs and significant risk factors. She approaches each family with the

- Martin O'Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary

goal of ensuring that children in the home are protected as she simultaneously provides services and links to community resources that help the family to change in a positive manner

This honoree has a passion for the older frail adults. She has worked in the Intake Unit and made home visits to assess Adult Services and senior care applications. As part of Charles County DSS's Foster Parents and Adult Foster Providers recruitment and retention drive, **Marion C. Schoen**, sits on the Foster Event Committee and sends out a quarterly newsletter. She also arranges and/or conducts quarterly trainings to keep her providers current with best practice information for the care and safety of their customers.

Alice McCreight is a Family Services caseworker in the St. Mary's County DSS. She participates in the Quality Improvement Committee and has developed a tracking system for In Home Service Cases so the agency can track the quality of intervention provided and the reduction of risk to the families served. Alice represents the agency as a member of the St. Mary's County Self-Sufficiency Team and has built working relationships with community partners on behalf of the families served by the agency.

Each of the honorees has been invited to attend an appreciation luncheon to be held on Monday, March 30, 2009. Lt. Governor Anthony Brown will bring remarks at the event.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also administers programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.